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Research Project

The Potential for Political Violence in Argentina, Ethiopia, and Thailand:

A Progress Report on a Quantitative Analytical Model

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[redacted]

January 1975

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Progress Roport No. 1 January 1975

The Potential for Political Violence in Argentina, Ethiopia, and Thailand: A Progress Report on a Quantitative Analytical Model

In this report we present the initial results of a series of tests of an analytical model of political violence adapted from Ted Robert Gurr's frustration-aggression theory (*Why Men Rebel*, Princeton University Press, 1970). The Gurr theory is based on the proposition that political violence is the product of group frustrations reinforced by the belief that violence is justified and by the capability to turn the resulting politicized anger into collective aggression. The form of the ensuing violence—*turmoil* (riots or demonstrations), *insurgency* (terrorist acts or small-scale guerrilla operations), *conspiracy* (attempted coups), or *internal war* (large-scale revolutionary actions or civil war)—will depend upon the kinds of relationships which are found to exist among various types of groups in the country under examination. A complete description of the theory and of the procedures used to apply the model is contained in the attached report of an experimental, *ex post facto* test of the model in the Chilean situation of mid-1973 (OPR 502, Revised, November 1974).

The purpose of this second phase of the project is to test the value of the Gurr model as a technique for assessing the nature and potential for political violence in societies of varying stages of development and with quite different cultural heritages and political institutions. The three countries chosen—Argentina, Ethiopia, and Thailand—seem to meet our requirements: Each represents a different stage of development in a distinct geographic area, and each is confronted with growing domestic unrest or political conflict.

For each of the three countries, a panel of five CIA analysts assigns numerical evaluations at regular intervals to the model's key variables—relative deprivation or collective frustration, belief in the justification for violence, coercive force, and institutionalized support. The evaluations are made for each group or "actor" which, in the panel's judgment, represents a significant political force in the country. The country's actors are also assessed in terms of their identification with four basic actor-categories: Pro-regime, mass-oriented (PR-MO); pro-regime, elite-oriented (PR-EO); anti-regime, mass-oriented (AR-MO); and anti-regime, elite-oriented (AR-EO). At each point of assessment during the test period, the panel's evaluations are combined statistically, using computerized procedures devised in the Office of Political Research, to produce overall evaluations of the Potential for Political Violence (PPV) and of the conditions conducive to particular types of violence in the country under observation. The three panels' evaluations are made on a monthly schedule, and the entire test series is expected to run until mid-1975.

3.5(c) NOTE: Comments or questions on this project will be welcomed by its author, [redacted] Office of Political Research, code 143, ext. 4091. 3.5(c)

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The summary and graphs on the following pages present the principal findings from the first two assessments by the country panels. The first assessment was made at different times by the three panels in the period from late November through December 1974; the second assessment was made by all three panels at the same time in mid-January 1975. Subsequent monthly progress reports, based on evaluations made around the mid-point of each month, will indicate changes over time in the panels' scoring patterns. In this way, the model's projections of the potential and form of political violence can be tested against actual developments in each country during the test period.

Summary of Principal Findings

(NOTE: The data cited below and in the following graphs are keyed to each country's Potential for Political Violence or PPV, as reflected by the median PPV score of each five-member country panel. The figures should not be regarded as representing absolute quantities; they should be interpreted merely as indicating *relative* status or strength, compared to other variables in the model assessed by the same country panel or to corresponding variables assessed by the other two country panels.)

Argentina:

Of the three countries, Argentina was the only one to show a rise in potential for political violence during the initial test period (a relatively sharp jump to a PPV score of 52). Within the limits of that expanded potential, conditions in Argentina were judged to be most conducive to turmoil (17), somewhat less to insurgency (15) and internal war (12), and least to conspiracy or an attempted coup (8). The potential for both conspiracy and internal war appeared, however, to have grown during the period. Each of the four actor groups contributed in roughly equal proportion to the rise in PPV (ending at a low of 10 for pro-regime, mass actors to a high of 16 for pro-regime, elite actors). Most of the increased potential for violence was attributable to a rise in politicized frustration (a sharp jump to 34), with little apparent increase in either the coercive force (8) or institutional support (10) needed to channel that frustration into violent action. Despite the sharp rise in potential for violence, at the end of the test period Argentina still ranked at an intermediate level between Ethiopia and Thailand in both politicized frustration and total PPV. Of the three country panels, that for Argentina showed the least variation among its members (range of 20 around the median PPV score of 52).

Ethiopia:

Though its potential for political violence appeared to decrease somewhat during the period, Ethiopia still ranked highest of the three countries in PPV (score of 62). Within the limits of that potential, the pattern of conditions conducive to particular types of violence in Ethiopia remained relatively unchanged during the period; conditions were most favorable to internal war (19) and conspiracy (18), less to insurgency (14), and least to turmoil (11). Anti-regime, elite actors had considerably more potential for violence (28) than the other three types of actors (16, 11, and 7). Both pro-regime, elite actors and pro-regime, mass actors showed a decrease in PPV during the period (down to 11 and 7 respec-

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tively). Though declining somewhat during the period, politicized frustration remained higher in Ethiopia (42) than in either Argentina (34) or Thailand (28). The coercive force and institutional support required to fuel the frustration into violence remained at a relatively low level (both 10), however, paralleling that in Argentina (8 and 10) and Thailand (9 and 10). Variation among members of the Ethiopian panel increased sharply during the period (to a range of 43 around the median PPV score of 62). This was roughly twice the variation found in the other two country panels.

Thailand:

Like Ethiopia, Thailand showed a small decrease in potential for violence during the period (a slight dip in PPV to 47). Within limits defined by that potential, conditions in Thailand appeared considerably more conducive to turmoil (17) and insurgency (16) than to either internal war (9) or conspiracy (5). The degree to which the conditions were fulfilled for internal war and conspiracy grew during the period, however, while the degree to which the conditions were fulfilled for turmoil and insurgency declined. Pro-regime, elite actors and anti-regime, mass actors had roughly equal PPV (15 and 14 respectively); while pro-regime, mass actors and anti-regime, elite actors had somewhat less PPV (both 9). The only significant change in actors' potential for violence during the period was the relatively sharp gain in PPV (to 9) for anti-regime, elite actors. Politicized frustration in Thailand was judged to be lower (28) than in either Argentina or Ethiopia, while the capability to wage violence (9 for coercive force, 10 for institutionalized support) approximated that in the other two countries. Variation among members of the Thai panel narrowed significantly from the first to the second assessment (down to a range of 23 around the median PPV score of 47).

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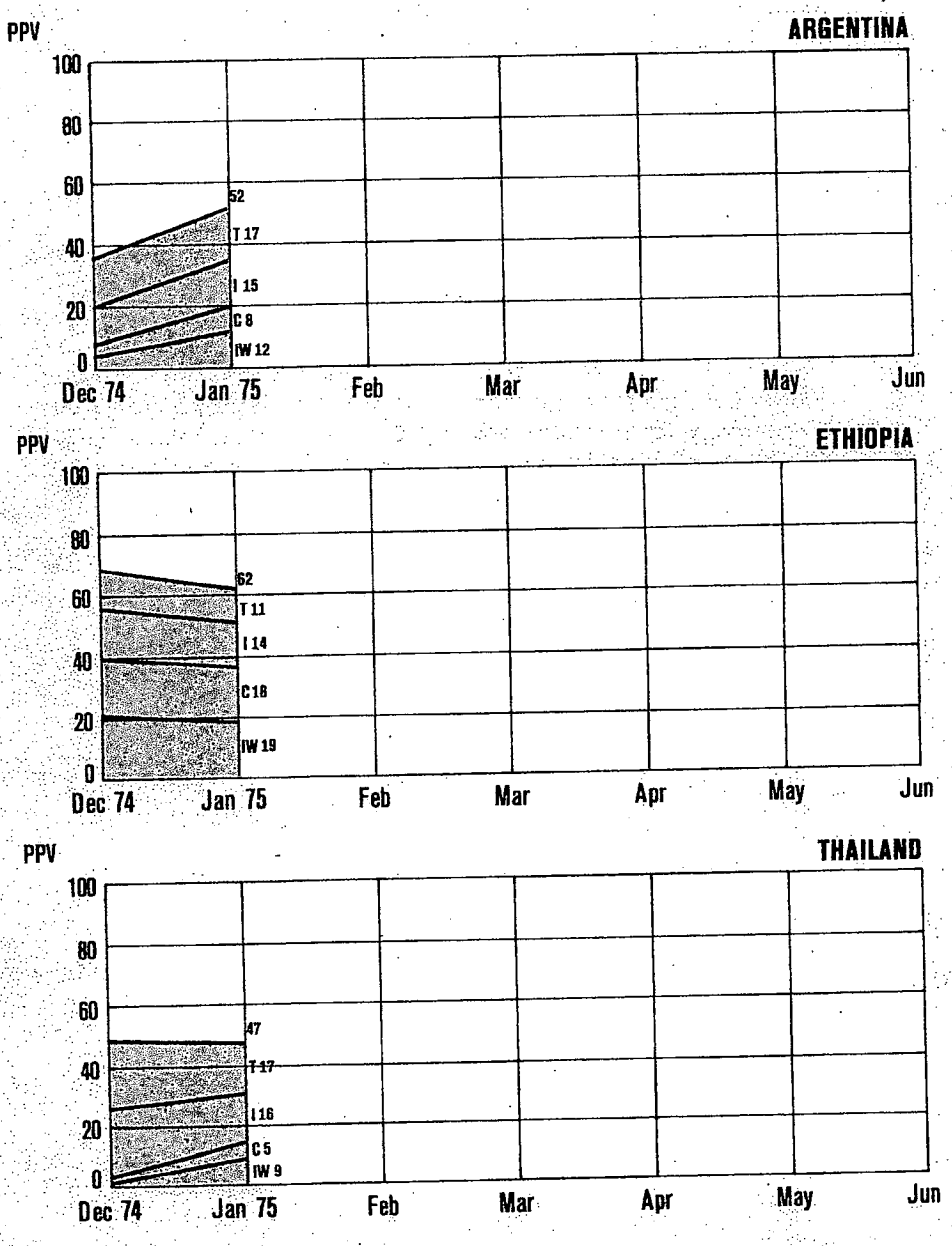
Conditions Conducive to Particular Types of Political Violence



Shaded areas represent, within the limits of each country's potential for political violence (PPV), the degree to which that country panel's median scores on key variables fulfill the conditions hypothesized by the Gurr theory as conducive to each type of political violence.

T - Turmoil
I - Insurgency
C - Conspiracy
IW - Internal War

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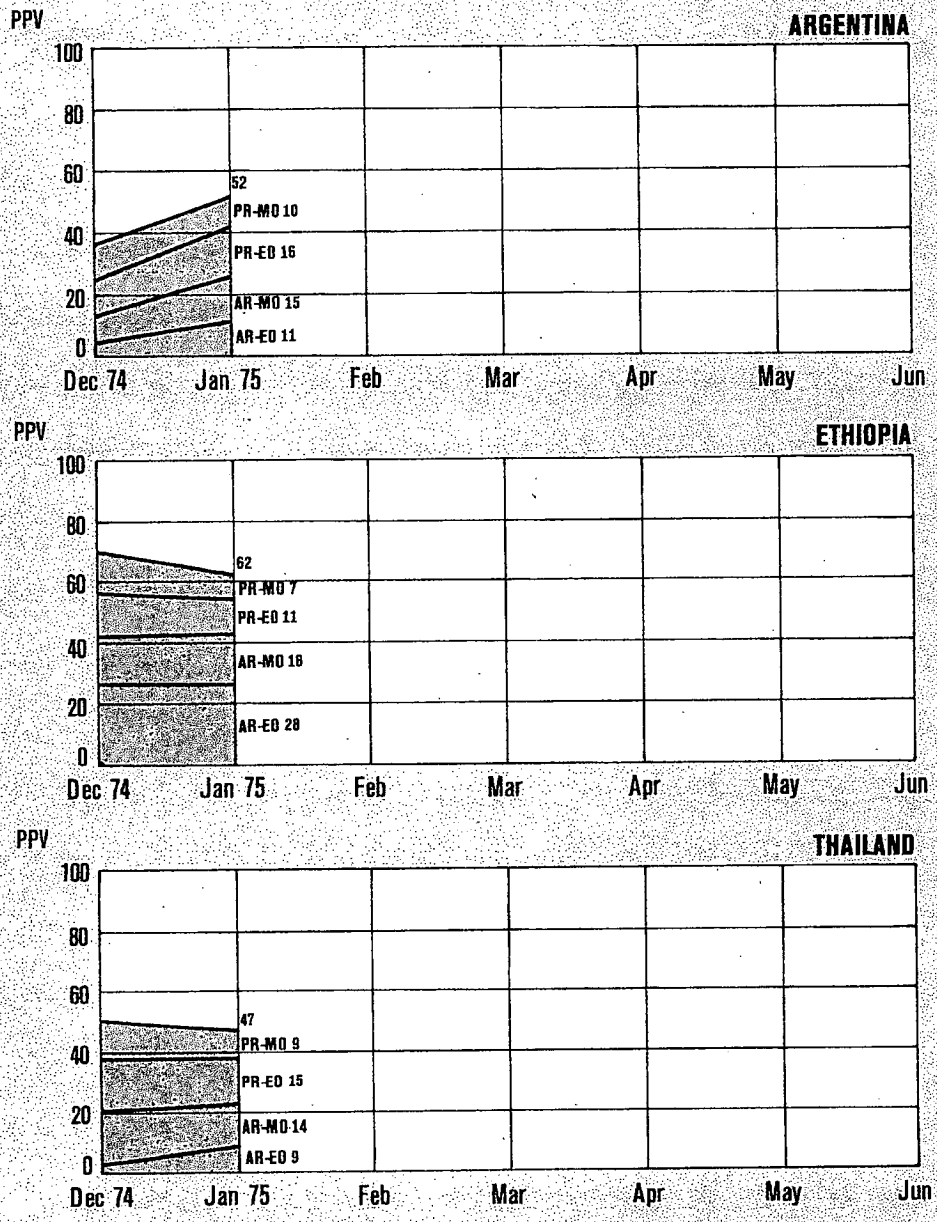
The Potential for Political Violence (PPV) for Each Type of Actor



Shaded areas represent each country panel's median scores for PPV for each actor category.

PR-MO-Pro-Regime, Mass-Oriented Actors
PR-EO- Pro-Regime, Elite-Oriented Actors
AR-MO-Anti-Regime, Mass-Oriented Actors
AR-EO- Anti-Regime, Elite-Oriented Actors

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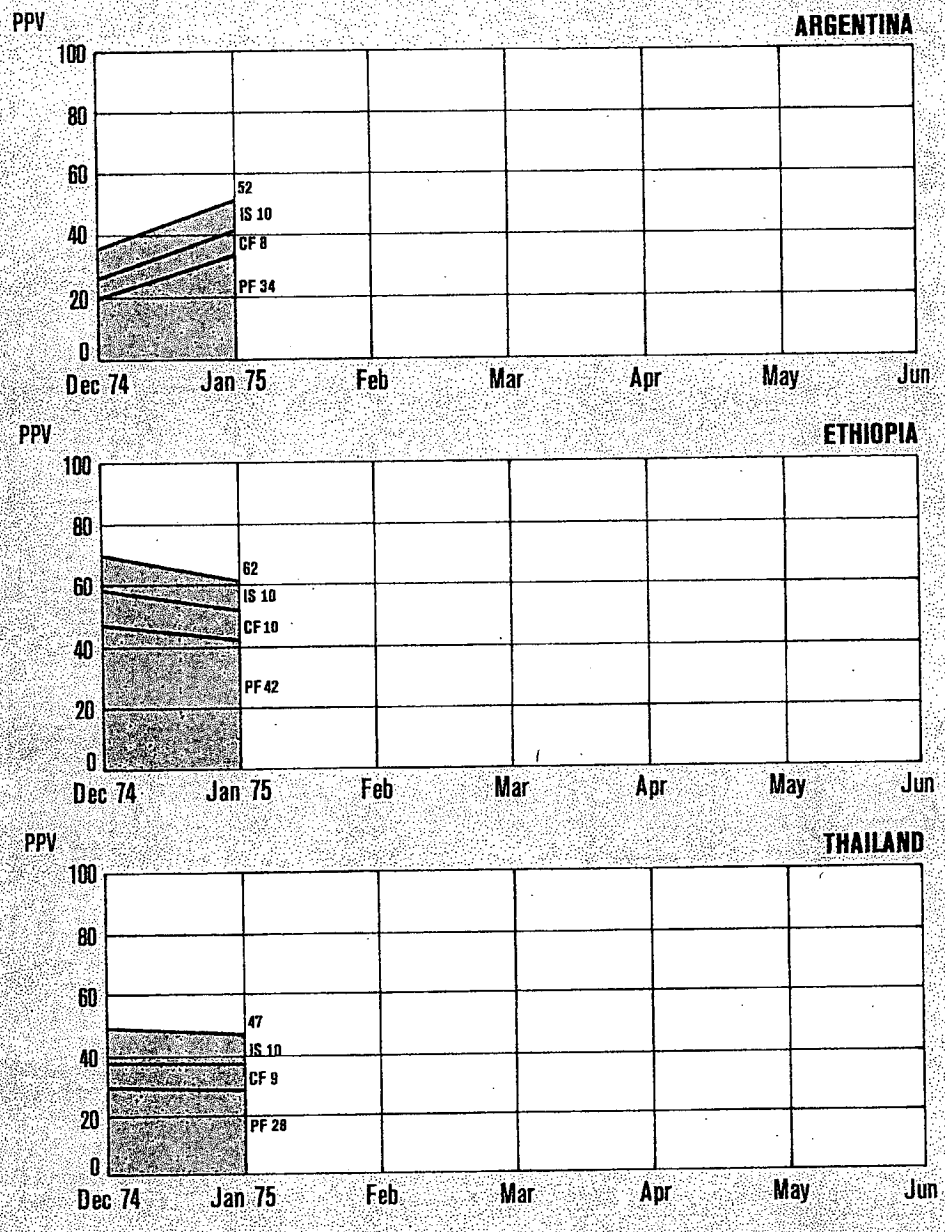
The Potential for Political Violence (PPV) in Terms of Key Variables in the Gurr Model



Shaded areas represent sums of each country panel's median scores for each key variable for all actor categories.

IS - Institutional Support
CF - Coercive Force
PF - Politicized Frustration (relative deprivation x justification for violence)

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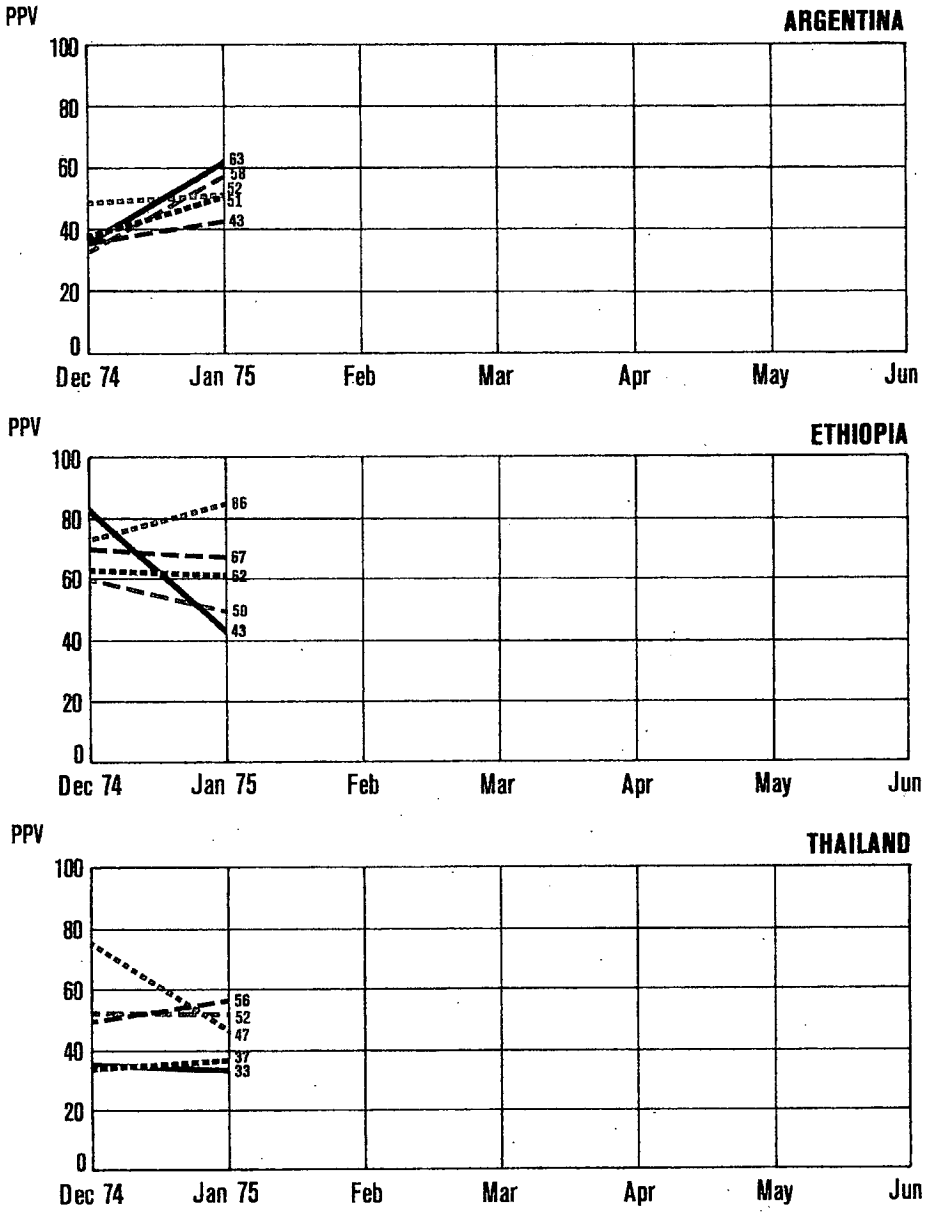
Individual Analysts' Assessments of the Potential for Political Violence (PPV)



Colored lines represent the range of individual analysts' scores for PPV around each country panel's median score for PPV.

- Analyst-A
- Analyst-B
- Analyst-C
- Analyst-D
- Analyst-E

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